Immigrant integration and criminalization

A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING IMMIGRATION POLICY AND IMMIGRANT FAMILIES’ EXCLUSION FROM THE SAFETY NET

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Immigrant policies reinforce structural racism

- Admissions and enforcement policies have long been used as intentional mechanisms of racialized exclusion (Gee and Ford 2012; Young and Wallace 2019)
  - The creation in 1924 of the Border Patrol (Ngai 2004)
  - The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (Hernandez 2009)
- Health care, social welfare, labor, and policing policy also function to reinforce racialized exclusion.
In contexts of racialized exclusion....
Immigrant families avoid or disenroll from public benefits
Immigrant families avoid or disenroll from public benefits

- Welfare reform triggered huge drops in enrollment by eligible immigrants (Van Hooke, 2003).

- Immigration enforcement also reduces immigrants’ access to essential health care, public benefits, and political participation (Toomey et al., 2014; Alsan & Yang, 2019; Vargas et al., 2015; Auedo-Dorantes and Lopez, 2017).

- Fear that changes to the public charge rule could impact families’ ability to secure legal permanent status is also linked to immigrant families unenrolling from benefits (Capps et al., 2020; Barofsky et al., 2020).
Children of immigrants are at risk of poor cognitive and behavioral health outcomes.
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- The toxic stress associated with undocumented status is linked with children of undocumented parents having higher risks of developmental delays. (Ortega, 2009; Yoshikawa, 2011).

- Fear of immigration enforcement and family separation is associated with high levels of emotional distress for both Hispanic noncitizens and citizens (Barbeck & Xu, 2010; Dreby, 2012; Quiroga, 2014).

- Immigration enforcement, like workplace raids, is linked with increases in depression and PTSD symptoms among children (Chaudry, 2010; Juby, 2011; Shonkoff, 2019).
Racialized exclusion is the result of processes of integration and criminalization.
Racialized exclusion functions along distinct pathways

Young and Wallace, 2019
Integration policies determine immigrants’ rights, protections, and eligibility for public benefits.

- Health care policy
- Labor policy
- Education policy
- Language access policy

Young and Wallace, 2019
Criminalization policies expand surveillance, policing, and deportation of noncitizens

- Police/sheriff collaboration with federal enforcement
- E-Verify work authorization
- Legal status checks by law enforcement
- IDs & driver’s licenses
- Sentencing laws

Young and Wallace, 2019
Figure 1. Framework of immigrant integration & criminalization policy

Integration policy

Criminalization policy

Enhanced deportability

Excluded deportability

Proactive inclusion

Deportable inclusion

Federal - state - local policies

Young and Wallace, 2019
Immigrant families live in contexts of simultaneous integration and criminalization.
Figure 2. Immigrant policy contexts across US States

- High criminalization, low integration
- High criminalization, high integration
- Low criminalization, high integration
- Low criminalization, low integration

Note: Policies enacted in US states by December 31, 2016

Young and Wallace, 2019
Figure 2. Immigrant policy contexts across US States

- **High criminalization, low integration**
- **High criminalization, high integration**
- **Low criminalization, high integration**
- **Low criminalization, low integration**

Note: Policies enacted in US states by December 31, 2016

Young and Wallace, 2019
Figure 2. Immigrant policy contexts across US States

- Yellow: High criminalization, low integration
- Orange: High criminalization, high integration
- Blue: Low criminalization, high integration
- Purple: Low criminalization, low integration

Note: Policies enacted in US states by December 31, 2016

Young and Wallace, 2019
Figure 2. Immigrant policy contexts across US States

- High criminalization, low integration
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Young and Wallace, 2019
States that have numerous criminalization policies have greater health inequities, even if they have numerous integration policies.
In states with more integration policies:

- Latino noncitizens are more likely to have health insurance (Young et al. 2017)
- Latino noncitizens have better mental health outcomes (Hatzenbuehler et al. 2017)
- Asian noncitizens are less likely to live in poverty (Young et al. 2018)

Despite having some integration policies, in states with more criminalization policies:

- All noncitizens are less likely to have a usual source of care (Young et al. 2019)
- Children of noncitizen Latina mothers are less likely to have health insurance (Alberto et al. 2020)
- Black noncitizens are more likely to have poor birth outcomes (Sudhinaraset et al. 2021)
Experiences of criminalization and integration in California
Experiences of surveillance by immigration or law enforcement officials

- Stayed indoors to avoid enforcement: 25%
- Seen immigration in neighborhood: Asian 5%, Latino 10%
- Asked to prove citizenship: Asian 5%, Latino 10%

Source: Research on Immigrant Health and State Policy Survey, 2018
Experiences of profiling by immigration or law enforcement officials

Source: Research on Immigrant Health and State Policy Survey, 2018
Experiences with deportation

Source: Research on Immigrant Health and State Policy Survey, 2018
Experiences with exclusion from COVID-19 relief and exclusion due to public charge

There was some help, some food stamps which came out to $360 for each kid. But because we don’t qualify for the other help of $1200 not even the kids got the $500.

– Daniel, Tulare County, CA

As immigrants, we can’t receive help. [The COVID-19 pandemic] didn’t have such a huge impact because we’ve always had to keep working and not been waiting for someone to help out...They’ve never provided us anything, because we are immigrants.

– Lily, Fresno County, CA

Public charge corroborated what everybody in the immigrant community was already thinking and saying. It was it was no surprise because everything is building up when you’re in that community. It’s just layers upon layers of information and acts and examples [of exclusion]. It’s very clear.

- Immigrant service provider, Merced County, CA

Source: COVID-19 and Latino Immigrants Study, 2021
Figure 1. Framework of immigrant integration & criminalization policy

Young and Wallace, 2019
Policy principles and recommendations

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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| **Decriminalize** | Decriminalize immigrants and people of color  
  • End local police and ICE collaboration and mandatory detention |
| **Dismantle**    | Dismantle categories of “deservingness”  
  • Extend public benefit eligibility to noncitizens currently excluded |
| **Stand behind** | Stand behind the power of immigrant communities  
  • Invest in immigrant-led health efforts |

Young and Wallace, 2021
Remembering

Dr. Steven Paul Wallace, PhD
1957-2021

A tireless champion for immigrant health equity, world-renowned researcher, and extraordinary mentor
Thank you!

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Appendices
RIGHTS Survey

- 75 questions about experiences of exclusion
- Latino and Asian immigrant respondents to the California Health Interview Survey
- 15-minute phone survey in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, & Vietnamese
- Over two years: 1,000 Asian and 1,000 Latino immigrants
- Year One: 1,060 Asian and Latino immigrants
More experiences of enforcement associated with an increase in distress

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